

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus for variable rate pipes is described. In one embodiment of the invention, a computer implemented method comprises allocating a pipe from part of a working channel and at least part of a protecting channel of a span of a bi-directional line switched ring (BLSR), the pipe having a bandwidth, transmitting a set of layer 2/3 traffic in the pipe, and reducing the pipe's bandwidth when a failure occurs in the ring.

04906.P016 062987/299, Docket No.